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California Energy Commission
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Sacramento, CA 95814

California Energy Commission

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Commissioners:

The California Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) appreciates this opportunity to comment on the EPIC program. I was pleased to see that there was a dedicated panel on “workforce issues” during both of the regional workshops, and we urge that “workforce development” be a priority for EPIC moving forward.

Meeting California’s energy goals requires a skilled workforce that is prepared to quickly and safely implement new technologies and systems as they come to market. Dysfunctional labor markets and skills mismatches have proven to be barriers to the expansion of the markets for new clean technology. California has the capacity to overcome these problems, but it requires a concerted effort between the state’s energy and workforce entities to engage strategically around workforce development planning.

We, therefore, encourage the Energy Commission to coordinate and collaborate with the state’s workforce development agencies on planning how best to meet the needs to establish a clean energy workforce. Specifically, agencies such as the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS), the California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB), the Employment Training Panel (ETP), and the California Community Colleges have a longstanding history of collaborating with one another to coordinate their resources to deliver a product that meets both individual employer’s and our economy’s changing needs for skilled labor.

The Division of Apprenticeship Standards, along with our workforce development agency partners would welcome the opportunity to expand our efforts in workforce planning to serve the needs of the energy sector as well. Bringing the state’s recognized experts in the workforce development arena into the planning process for EPIC would help ensure that the program’s workforce efforts are strategic, effective, and aligned with other resources.

EPIC’s workforce development efforts should build off the state’s existing training infrastructure to meet the needs of the clean energy workforce. State-certified apprenticeship, in particular, is a resource that should be central to the clean energy workforce development agenda. As noted by the Donald Vial Center on Employment in the Green Economy, in their 2011 “Workforce, Education & Training Needs Assessment” for the CPUC, the direct job impacts of energy efficiency policy will fall heavily on the traditional construction trades.¹ The California Division of Apprenticeship Standards provides state certification of journey-level competency in each and

¹ Zabin et al (2011). WE&T Needs Assessment for Energy Efficiency, Distributed Generation and Demand Response. CPUC. Page 283. http://www.irl.berkeley.edu/vial/publications/WET_Part2.pdf

every of these traditional construction trades and has the capacity to certify journeyman upgrades in specific industry specialties.

Apprenticeship programs are industry-driven. Employers participate in curriculum design so that it matches industry demand and keeps pace with changes in technology and practice. Apprentices learn theory in the classroom that they apply on the job, and openings in training programs are directly linked to employer need.

We support EPIC's attention to the need for workforce development to meet California's energy goals and I would like to express the Division of Apprenticeship Standards' commitment to and interest in collaborating with the CEC, along with the state's other workforce agencies, to help guide the direction of this program.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Diane Ravnik". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "R" at the end.

Diane Ravnik
Chief